# LEONARD COHER SOLSOLS LONARD COHER LONARD CO

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Avalanche/page 15 Sing Another Song, Boys/22 Famous Blue Raincoat/26 Diamonds In The Mine/30 Last Year's Man/33 Love Calls You By Your Name/40 Joan of Arc/45 Dress Rehearsal Rag/50

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Leonard Cohen's fans are word people. They believe a song's lyrics are more important than its instrumentation, packaging, or the lead singer's crotch. It could even be that for most of them, words have become the first-aid station in the preventive detention camp of their feelings. Certainly they are all helpless romantics, trapped by rage in the age of efficiency.

Cohen, of course, is crazy, but he is cunning enough to keep on the loose. A mystery man with a big nose, he is a

"beautiful creep." He wants to be handsome, but settles for looking better than he expected. And wishing to be slick, he succeeds just enough to keep on wishing. He has no desire to be a pop star, yet he wants to sell records.

Over the house phone at Berkeley's stately old Claremont Hotel, he agreed to a few questions only after I assure him that we will meet on equal terms. "I never do interviews," he says, "I prefer an interviewer to take the same risks that I do. In other words, not to make a question and answer kind of scene, because I'm interested in . . . like a description from your side . . . to practice the novelist's rather than the interviewer's art. Say, like what was the feeling of the interviewer and how does that relate to the work we all know. Rather than like . . . put me on the line for this or that type of question . . ."

Cohen ordered a scotch and soda for me from room service—at the time it seemed like the perfect drink. He introduced me to Charlie Daniels, a member of his touring band, the Army. Once an 80 cigarettea-day addict, Charlie is now down to five sticks of gum at once.

As I set up the tape recorder, Cohen turned down the sound from the TV. He left the picture turned to Lassie. A definite feeling of uncertainty settled around us, the intruders. Conen carefully scrutinized us. He repeated his insistance that our meeting be held on common ground. "I had to be reminded of other things I've said. It's just sheer fatigue which has allowed me to conduct this whole scene. I don't believe in it, you know.

"One of the reasons I'm on tour is to meet people. I consider it a reconaissance. You know, I consider myself, like in a military operation. I don't feel like a citizen. I feel like I know exactly what I have to do. Part of it is familiarizing myself with what people are thinking and doing. The kind of shape people are in is what I am interested in determining . . . because I want to lay out any information I have and I want to make it appropriate. So if I can find where people are at any particular moment, it makes it easier for me to discover if I have anything to say that is relevant to the situation."

A refugee from the men's garment industry (he pushed clothes racks for a time), he has arrived at 36 years of age. He is tastefully dressed in conservatively flared tan pants, black shirt, and bush jacket, but he carefully denies affluence by keeping himself particularly emaciated. He firmly believes that women are gaining control of the world, and that it is just. He emphasizes, "Women are really strong. You notice how strong thay are? Well, let them take over. Let us be what we're supposed to be—gossips, musicians, wrestlers. The premise being, there can be no free men unless there are free women.

His stories, poems and songs are all quite personal, written to and about himself and the lifetimes he has drifted through. Sometimes nakedly, but just as often humorously, he looks down from the cross and decides that crucifixtion may as well be holy. He answers cautiously, but once begun, his conversation glides easily from the writing of his books to the writing of his songs. "As I've said before, just because the lines don't come to the end of the page doesn't necessarily qualify it as poetry. Just because they do doesn't make it prose.

Oh, I'm continually blackening pages . . .

## LADIES AND GENTS, LEONARD COHEN

by Jack Hafferkamp



"I've always played and sung. Ever since I was 15. I was in a barn dance group called the Buckskin Boys when I was about 18 . . . 17. It was just at a certain moment that I felt that songs of a certain quality came to me that somehow demanded . . . or somehow engage a larger audience. Like when you write a good song, you feel you can sing it to other people. When you write other songs that are not so good you just sing them to yourself. I don't know . . . I think . . . I guess greed had something to do with it.

"And I forget, a lot had to do with poverty. I mean I was writing books (two novels and four volumes of poetry) and they were being very well received . . . and that sort of thing, but I found it was very difficult to pay my grocery bill. I said, like it's really happening. I'm starving. I've got beautiful reviews for all my books, and you know. I'm very well thought of in the tiny circles that know me, but like . . . I'm really starving. So then I started bringing some songs together. And it really changed my whole scene."

Bob Johnston, friend, producer, and keyboards, and Ron Cornelium, guitar and moustache for the Army, wandered in to tell of the first LP, Leonard Cohen.

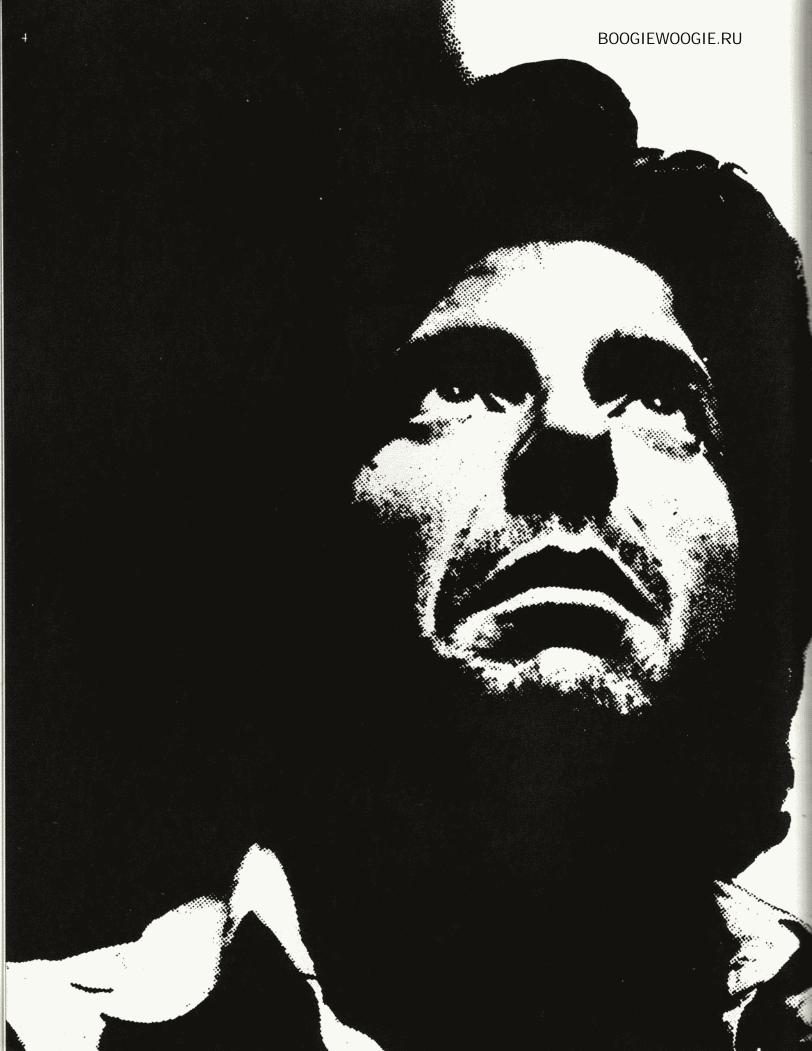
BOOGIEWOOGIE.RU to be able to translate the ideas I had to him. So that he, naturally, took over and filled in the vacuum that was caused by my own ignorance and incompetence. You know . . . it was a record that has, I think . . . oh, I like it now. I think a lot of people have listened to it . . .

"The second one [Songs From a Room] was largely unloved as I can see it . . . from people's reactions. It was very bleak and wiped out. The voice in it has much despair and pain in the sound of the thing. And I think it's an accurate reflection of where the singer was . . . at the time. I mean very, very accurate. Too accurate for most people's taste. But as I believe that a general wipe-out is imminent and that many people will be undergoing the same kind of breakdown that the singer underwent, the record will become more meaningful as more people crack up.

"The third one (just released) is the way out. It is a return...or maybe not even a return—a claim, another kind of strength . . ."

Isn't that a kind of heavy responsibility? Aren't you making a claim to be some sort of guide or prophet? It seems that by releasing records you are making that sort of claim.

"Very true, very true," he said. "Look, I think the times are tough arrival of the limousines. I asked about the picture on the jacket of his ... these are hard times. I don't want in any way to set myself up as Timothy Leary or Abbie Hoffman. I mean, "The picture on the back is a Mexican religious pictur ecalled I'm not one of those guys, I have my "Anima Sola", the lonely spirit or the lonely soul. It is the feelings about how to move myself triumph of the spirit over matter. The spirit being that into areas which are not combeautiful woman breaking out of the chains and the pletely bordered with pain. fire and prison. And I've tried to lay "When the record came out . . . there was out my chart as caresome difficulty between the producer (John fully as I can. I Simon) and myself. I don't mean there was havecomethrough any malice. It was really like a misundersomething. standing. And I wasn't well enough versed don't want to in . . . just the whole recording procedure boast about it. I



don't even want to talk about it. Look . . . you know, the songs are inspired. I don't pretend to be a guide. I do pretend to be an instrument for certain kinds of information at certain moments. Not all moments, and it has nothing to do with me as a guy. I may be a perfect scoundrel . . . As a matter of fact, I am . . . just like the guy on the scene. But there are moments when I am the instrument for certain kinds of information."

In the Canadian Film Board movie, Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. Leonard Cohen, you wrote something on the wall while you were

sitting in the bathtub.

"Caveat Emptor, or buyer beware, I think it's good advice. Especially these days. Not specifically from me, but . . . umm . . . I let anybody judge me by the severest terms they choose . . . I simply think that on both sides of the underground railway there is a lot of occasion to exercise our skepticism."

As Cohen speaks it becomes readily apparent that meeting people is only one reason for the tour. Another, more important reason is that for him "tours are like bull-fighting. They are a test of character every night." And that, as he says, "is something I am interested in examining."

One purposely unpublicized aspect of the current U.S.-Canada tour has been the stops at various mental hospitals. Cohen has initiated these concerts, he insists, not from any sense of charity, but because he enjoys them. There is none of that "sense of work, of show biz, of turning people on." He does it because the people there are really in tune to the songs. "Those people are in the same landscape as the songs come out of. I feel that they under-

stand them." In his way, Cohen has explored many terrains, physical and psychic. Success as a songwriter and performer has allowed him to



wander BOOG HEAD OOGH MRUTeal, 5 his home, to Cuba, Hydra, Paris, Nashville-and back to Montreal. He left Greece, he says because, "I was ready to leave. Whether the regime changed or not. As a matter of fact, Greece is a very peaceful place to be in now.".

Carrying visions of the Spanish Civil War in his head, he went to Cuba to defend Havana during the Bay of Pigs. Slowly he came to realize that he "was exactly the kind of enemy the Fidelistos

were describing: bourgeois, individualistic, a self-indulgent poet." He began hanging out with people who were out of work and on no side, "procurers, pushers, whores and all night movie operators." Amid the Chinese and Czechoslovakian technicians, he found himself the only tourist in Havana.

In Paris during the O.A.S. riots and in Montreal during the socalled "occupation of the city" he felt the same stirrings. He is bothered by the fact that what he reads in other parts of the world about events he's seen usually has "very little correspondence with the actual ambiance of the place. None of those reports correspond at all to the reality that I perceive."

The Berkeley Community Theater was very nearly packed when Cohen came on stage 15 minutes late. The audience was young but mixed. Streeties mingled with Cal frat men and their pin-mates. Only occasionally were they interrupted by a wellexperienced face. He started "Suzanne," but stopped



and walked offstage accompanied by much good natured applause. The audience was his before he came to the theater. Smiling like an expectant mother, Cohen, the self-proclaimed arch-villain, returned to invite those in the back of the hall to fill up the empty seats and space in front of the stage. Naturally enough, very little encouragement was necessary. A large number of people scrambled forward. He called for the house lights. "We should all be able to see one another."

He began again with "The Stranger Song." His voice was surprisingly well defined and strong. After another song the Army appeared. Two more guitars, bass, keyboards, and two female voices. Elton Fowler, Susan Musmann and, that night, Michelle Hopper, made up the rest of the group. They all started into "Bird on the Wire."

The association of Leonard Cohen with the Army was fortuitously arranged through the good offices of Bob Johnston. They provide just the right musical superstructure for his songs. Expertly but not overpoweringly they give his ideas a range and versatility his previous records have lacked. After the concert they would go back to Nashville with him to lay down the last track for the new album. If tonight's concert is a proper indication, several tracks will have a definite country sound.

Meanwhile, having found less space than bodies to fill it, the crowd began settling in the aisles. Aisles-sitting, though—as everyone knows—is illegal. An announcement was necessary. "I've had some crucial news from the authorities," he began facetiously, then broke

into a spontaneous song:

"It's forbidden to sit in the aisles BOOGIEWOOGIE.RU
As for me I couldn't give a damn
I don't care where you sit
I don't care where you stand, either
or recline in any position you wish
Nonetheless, I feel it is my civic duty
To tell you to get out of the aisles immediately
So come up on the stage instead
And they came up on the stage
And they won't go back again
And they came up on my stage

And they won't go back no more
Oh, I promise to do anything
But they won't go back no more.
No, they won't go back anymore."
And, clapping, laughing and singing, the audience

And, clapping, laughing and singing, the audience once again moved forward. The Army was engulfed. Only Cohen stood out as if people were afraid to get too close. A few murmurs of discontent were

heard from the expensive seats, but they were to no avail. Not only was the stage filled, but the aisles remained jammed.



Another announcement of some seriousness was imperative: "It is with no regret that I bear the final tidings in this sordid drama . . . They say we've got just one more song . . . if the aisles aren't cleared by then the concert will end." Someone behind Cohen shouted, "Make it a long one." He replied, "I don't think they'll be taken in by our cunning. In a while they'll kill the

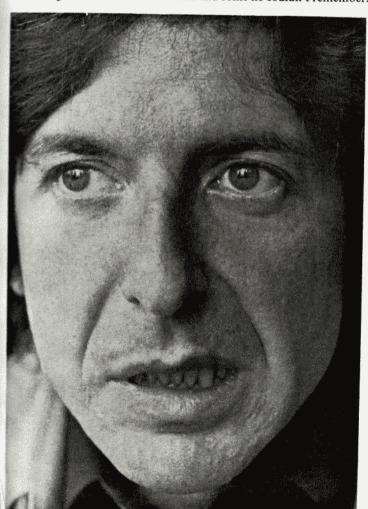
power and then start on the rest of us . . . I don't care what happens myself because I feel really good . . . I can't concern myself with these details. I'm not in the business of clearing away people."

As the song began, something truly remarkable happened. Hesitantly, a few people began to filter back to their original seats. Appreciative applause from the seat-bound majority led even more people to reconsider the moral implications of being in the way. A general retreat commenced. And at that very moment, the police, who allegedly had been grouping for action, relented by giving permission for people to sit in the aisles. Cheers filled the house. Leonard Cohen was still grinning when he left the stage for intermission.

Intermission? He and the Army stepped into the wings, looked at one another, and wordlessly returned to the stage. "That was intermission. This is so good, why stop now?" Although the concert was billed as an evening of songs and poetry, only two short poems were recited. Cohen sang several new numbers confidently. He was obviously pleased and his pleasure was returned by the audience.

The band couldn't leave without an encore. Tired, but game, Cohen returned to sing "Seems So Long Ago, Nancy." He explained that he wasn't sure if he could remember the song. Nancy's spirit was clear enough, but they hadn't done it in a long time. For help he invoked her memory by telling her story. They knew one another in Canada, long years ago. In 1961. Before there was a Woodstock Nation or hip newspapers. When to be strange was to be on your own. Nancy's father was an important judge, but she lived near the street. Her friends told her she was free. "She slept with everyone. Everyone. She had a child, but it was taken away. So she shot herself in the bathroom."

After that, the crowd wanted still more. But Cohen would only come back to bow. The concert was over. Back stage road manager Bill Donovan searched everywhere for Cohen's already missing guitar. Leonard greeted some familiar faces and some he couldn't remember.



Gracefully he edged from person to person towards the exit. Clumps of people stood around speaking low with much affirmative nodding of the head. The guitar was found to have been stuck in the wrong case.

Back at the hotel, exhausted, champagned, and groupied after (some intellectually, some in the usual way), Leonard Cohen sank wearily into the sofa. A bottle circulated. 'Nancywas withus. Withouther we wouldn't have been able to pull it off.'



He slipped off his boots. People began arriving for a party. Partly from fatigue, partly from triumph he spoke freely of the concert and bigger things. "I like that kind of situation where the public is involved. I happen to like it when things are questioned. When the very basis of the community is questioned. I enjoy those moments."

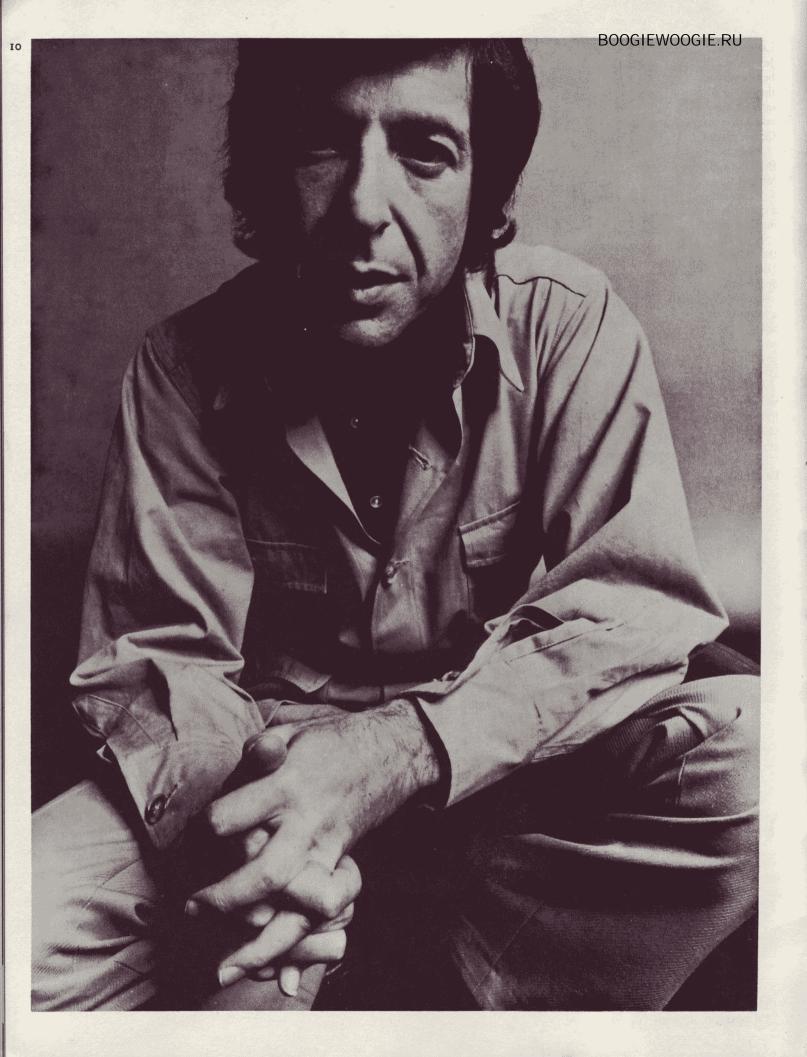
The cheerful detente he had achieved between the crowd and the police reinforced something he had said earlier. "I believe there is a lot of goodwill in society and in men... and it's just a matter of where you cast your energy. You can in some way place yourself at the disposal of the goodwill that does exist... or you can say there is no goodwill in society and what we must do is completely destroy the thing. I believe that in the most corrupt and reactionary circles there is goodwill. I believe that men are mutable and that things can change... It's a matter of how we want things to change."

More people arrived. Old friends, Ron Cornelius' relatives, and strangers hoping for a chance to talk to Cohen. Despite his exhaustion, Cohen was ready for them. "Man, you know what is best about having a good crowd and giving them everything you've got? The incoherence afterwards. That's what... Hey, where are the 14-year-old girls? This is California, isn't it? Where are the 14-year-old girls?"

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Leonard Cohen openly refuses to give interviews to newspapers, Jewish or otherwise. Possibly he is shy, despite regular appearances before vast audiences, including 600,000 at the Isle of Wight. Nevertheless, he did consent to give written answers to questions of Jewish interest put to him by the Jewish Telegraph. Psychotherapists were asked to comment on the answers and their observations on Leonard Cohen make fascinating reading.

Said one consultant psychotherapist: "Obviously he is very deepthinking and interested in sublimative writing. (That is, he expresses

himself through different characters.)

"This is demonstrated in the answer to all questions. The first is a quotation from Psalm 137, verse 5. It reads in full 'If I forget thee, may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth'."

King David, the writer of the Psalm, was putting the words into the mouths of the Babylonian exiles and, said Dr. Judah J. Slotki, Director of the Central Hebrew Board, "This could certainly be

applied to Jewish identity."

Cohen's quotes from Psalm 35, verse 4 in his response to the second question aptly fits the problem of anti-semitism, and the beautiful woman, says one psychotherapist, represents his Jewish youth and his Jewish background.

His fifth quotation is from Exodus. It was Moses who said, "... just balances, just weights." Laying down certain commandments of justice and righteousness, Moses had earlier declared: "Thou shalt not have in the bag two kinds of stone . . ."

BOOGIEWOOGIE.RU According to the psychotherapist, "Leonard Cohen does not 11 express physically to the outside world that he is Jewish, but philosophically he does."

Final word from Dr Slotki: "Anyone who can quote these must have read the Psalms and the Book of Samuel as well."

This analysis of Leonard Cohen does tend to make nonsense of the arguments of those who feel that the songs he records are meaningless. He obviously has studied the Bible deeply and is wellacquainted with the Psalms. This permeates his poetry. In his "Songs From a Room" album, for example, the second song is entitled "The Song of Isaac", which retells the biblical story of Abraham's near sacrifice of his son.

Cohen's knowledge of the Bible and Psalms far transcends that of the average Jew, or, for that matter, non-Jew. Even the most learned scholar would find difficulty in quoting with the ease of Leonard

1. Do you manage to retain your Jewish teaching in spite of your fame?

### If I forget thee

2. Do you ever find that your Judaism is a hindrance? Do you come across any anti-semitism?

### let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it

3. Does your Jewish background influence any of your writing?

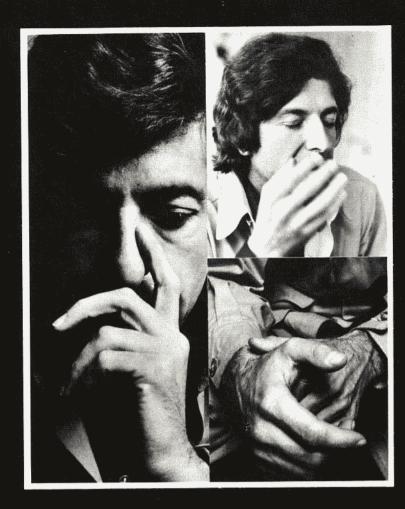
### from the roof he saw a woman washing herself

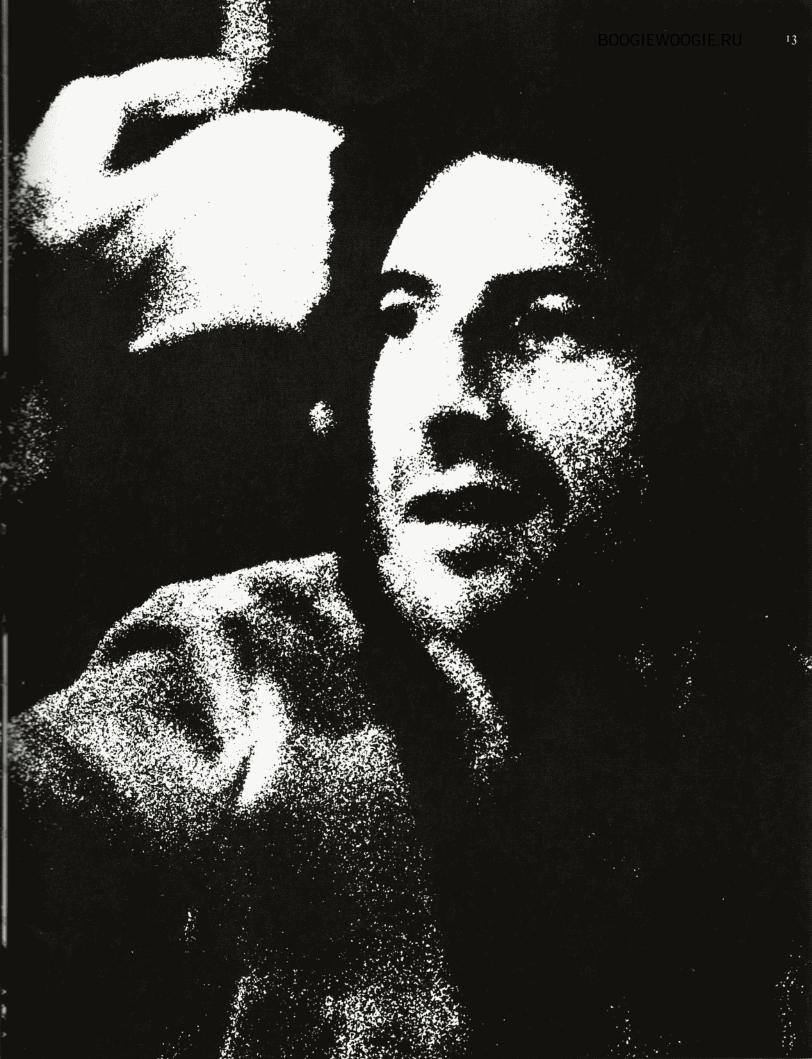
4. Does your Jewish background in any way help your writing?

### and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.

5. Where were you born? Was your Jewish upbringing strict?

Just balances, just weights Llunaw (other



















I stepped into an avalanche
it covered up my soul
When I am not this hunch back that you see
I sleep beneath the golden hills
You who wish to conquer pain
you must learn to serve me well.

- 2. You scrape my side by accident as you go down for gold

  The cripple here that you clothe and feed is neither starved nor cold.

  He does not ask for your company not at the center, center of the world.
- 3. When I'm on a pedestal you do not raise me there Your laws do not compel me to kneel grotesque and bare I myself am the pedestal for this ugly hump that you see.
- 4. You who wish to conquer pain you must learn what makes me kind The crumbs of love that you offer me they're the crumbs I've left behind Your pain no credentials here it's just a shadow, shadow of my wound.
- 5. I have begun to long for you I who have no creed I have begun to ask for you I who have no need You say you've gone away from me but I can feel you when you breathe.
- 6. Do not dress in those rags for me I know you are not poor And don't love me quite so fiercely nowwhen you know that you are not sure It is your turn to love it is your flesh that I wear.

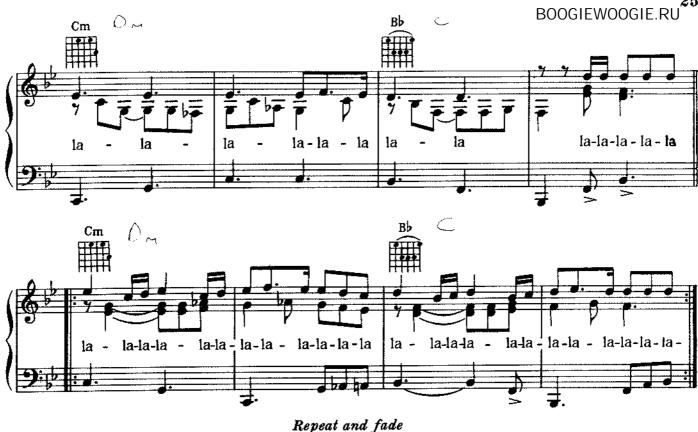
### **SING ANOTHER SONG, BOYS**











She finds him lying in a heap
She wants to be his woman
He says yes I just might go to sleep
But kindly leave, leave the future, leave that open.
He stands where it is steep
But I guess he thinks that he's the very first one
His hands upon his leather belt now

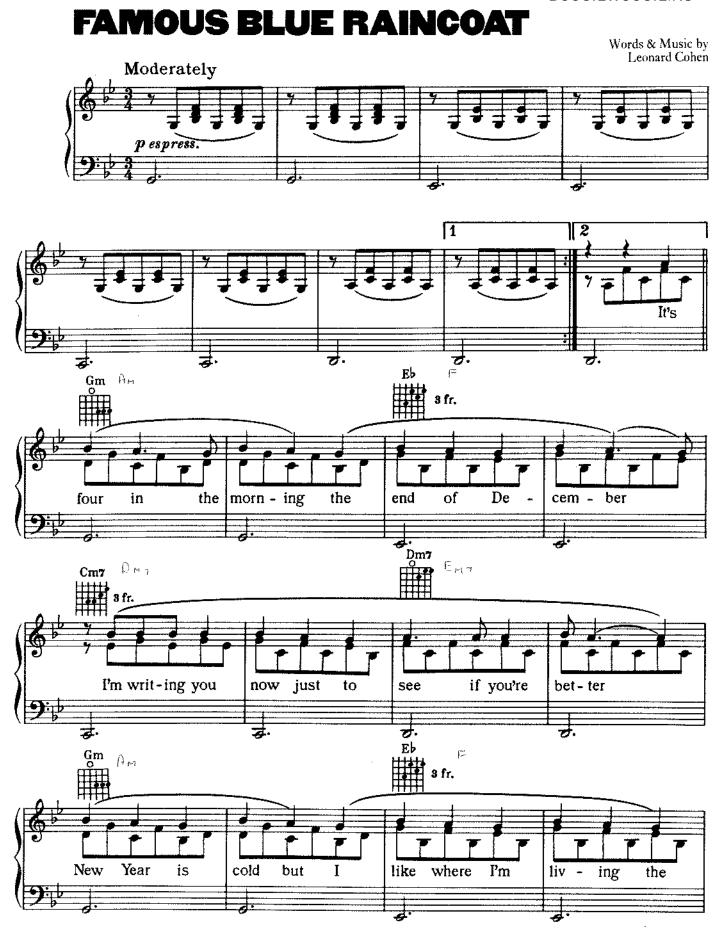
Like it was the wheel of some big ocean liner.

And she will learn to touch herself so well

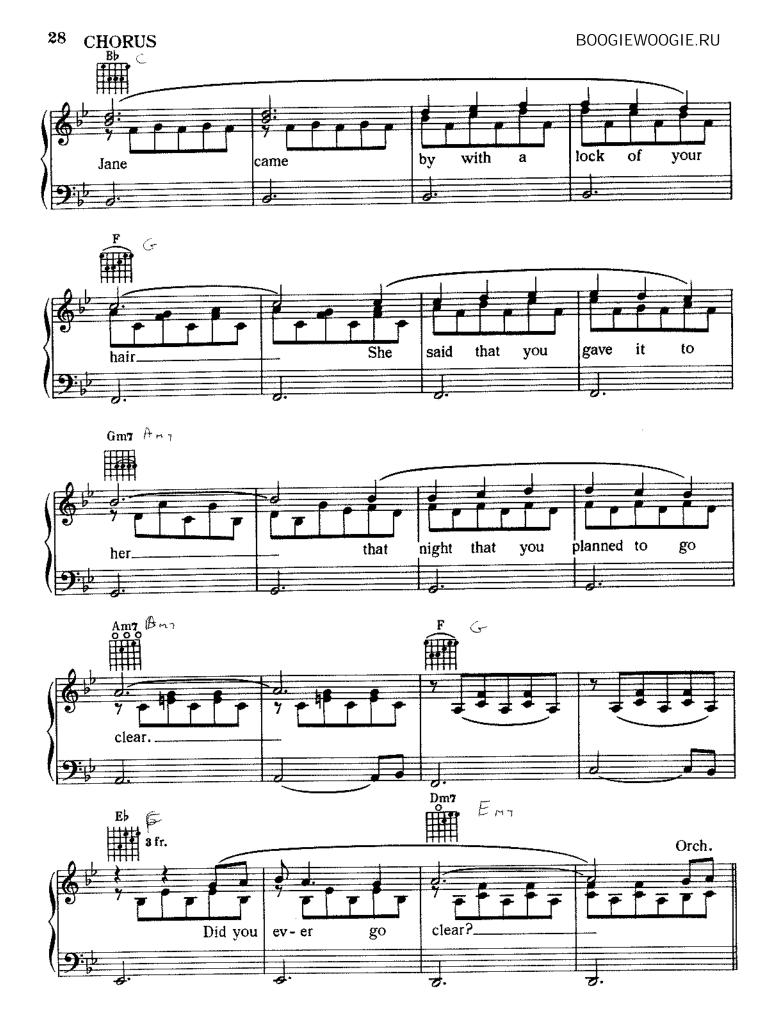
As all the sails burn down like paper

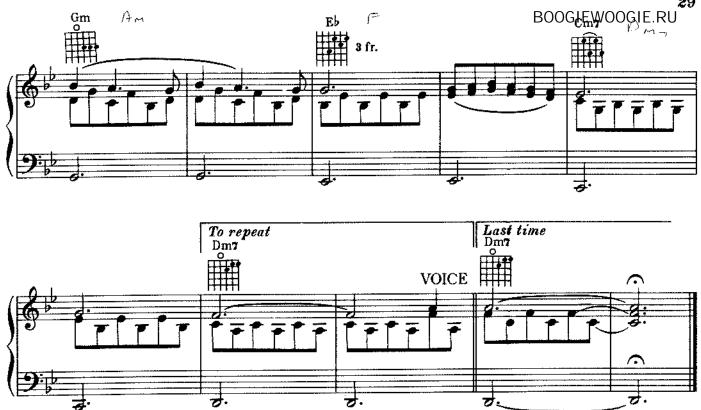
And he has with the chain of his famous cigarillo.

They'll never, they'll never ever reach the moon
At least not the one that we're after
It's floating broken on the open sea (look at them my friends)
And it carries no survivors.
But tet's leave these lovers wondering
Why they cannot have each other
And let's sing another song, boys
This one has grown old and bitter.
La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la (etc.)









The last time we saw you, you looked so much older Your famous blue raincoat was torn at the shoulder You'd been to the station to meet ev'ry train You came home with Lilly Marlen.

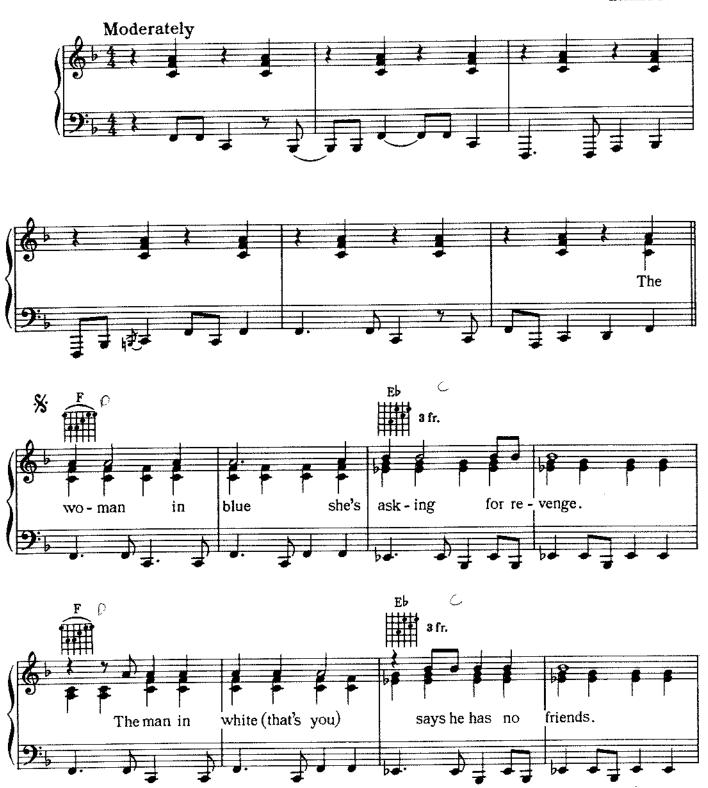
And you treated my woman to a flake of your life And when she came back she was nobody's wife Well, I see you there with a rose in your teeth one more thin gypsy play I see Janes away she sends her regards.

And what can I tell you my brother, my killer What can I possibly say I guess I will miss you, I guess I' forgive you I'm glad you stood in my way. If you ever come by here for Jane or for me Tho' your enemy is sleeping his woman is free Yes, thanks for the trouble you took from her eyes I thought it was there for good so I never tried.

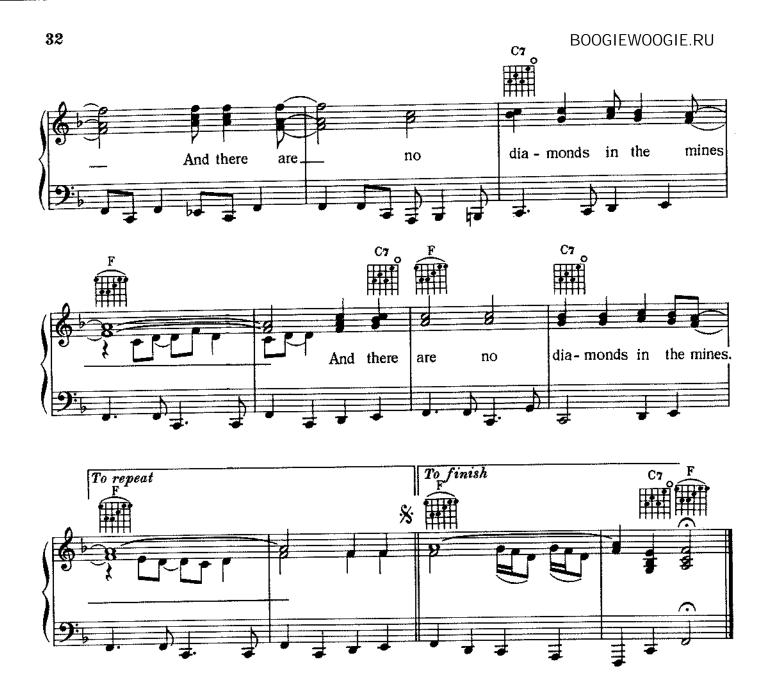
Chorus And Jane came by with a lock of her hair She said that you gave it to her That night that you planned to be clear Sincerely your crime.

### DIAMONDS IN THE MINE

Words & Music by Leonard Cohen







Well, you tell me that your lover has a broken limb You see I'm kind-a restless now and it's on account of him; Well I saw the man in question just the other day He was eating up a lady where lions and Christians play. (To Chorus)

Ah, there is no comfort in the cauldrons of the witch
Some very clever doctor went and sterilised the pitch
And the only man of energy, yes, the evolutions pride
He trained a hundred women just to kill an unborn child.

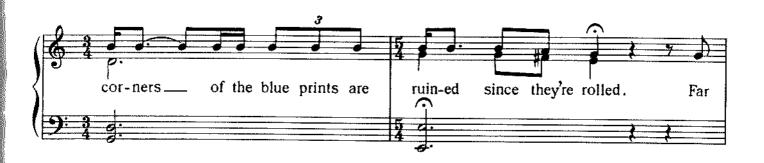
(To Chorus)

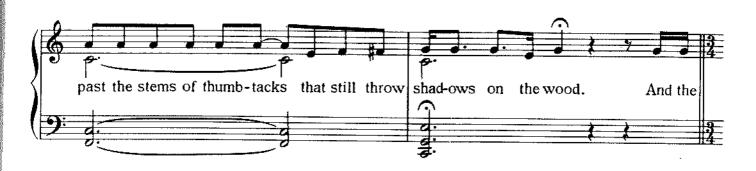
### **LAST YEAR'S MAN**

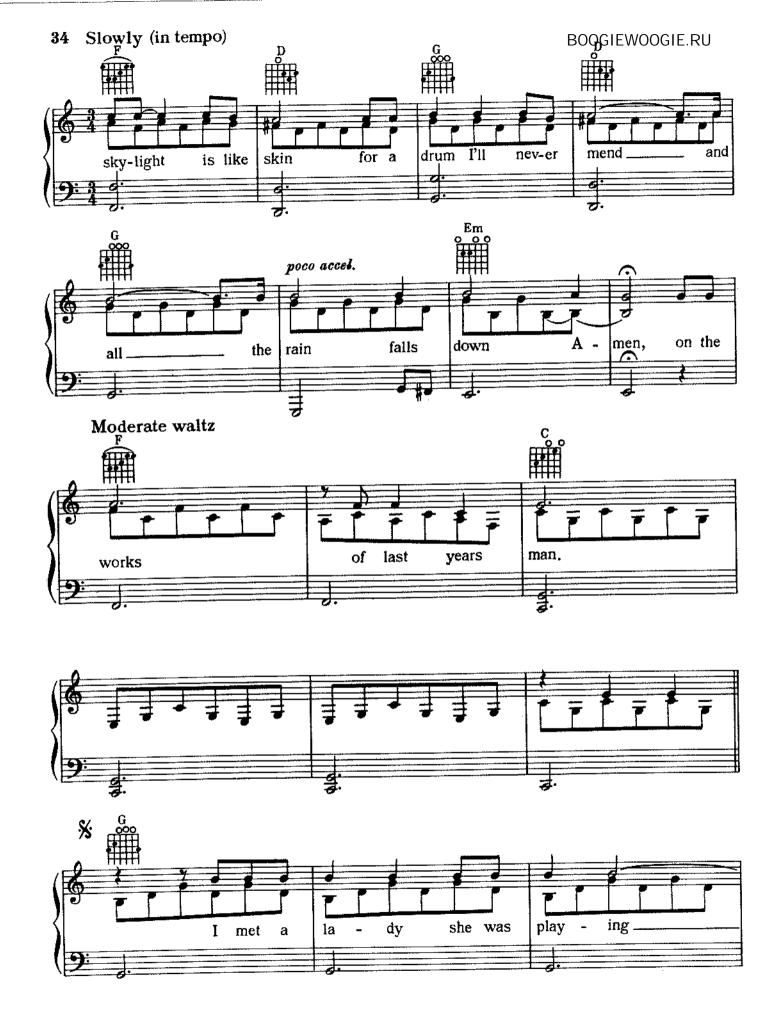
Words & Music by Leonard Cohen

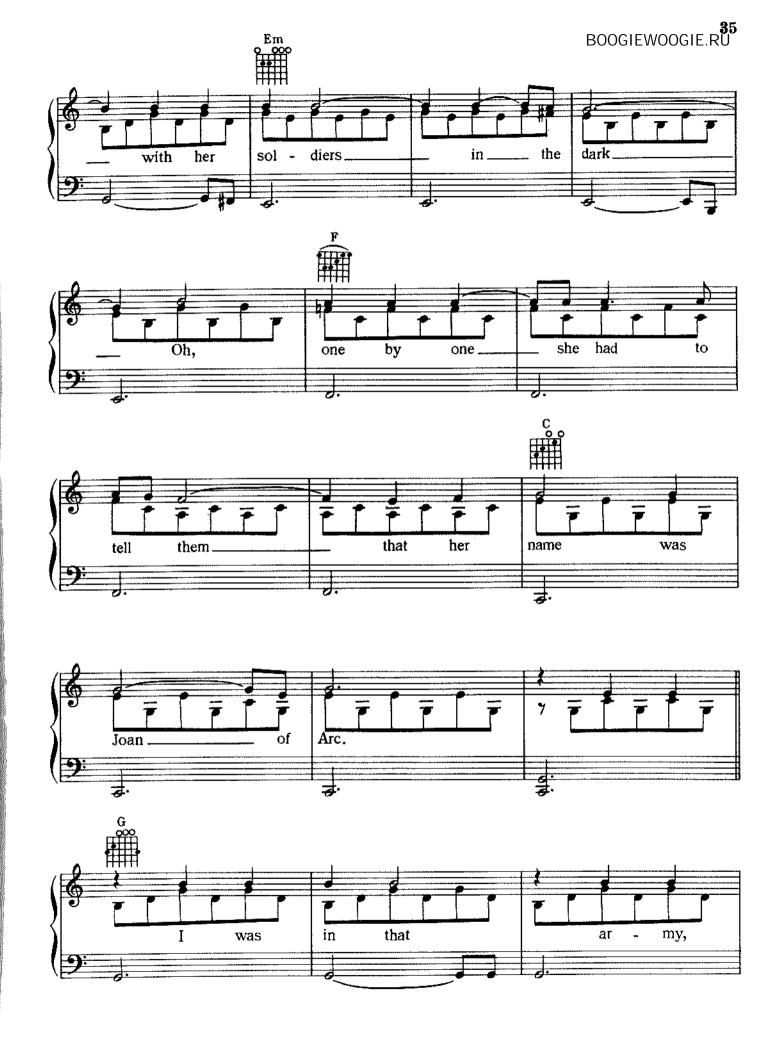


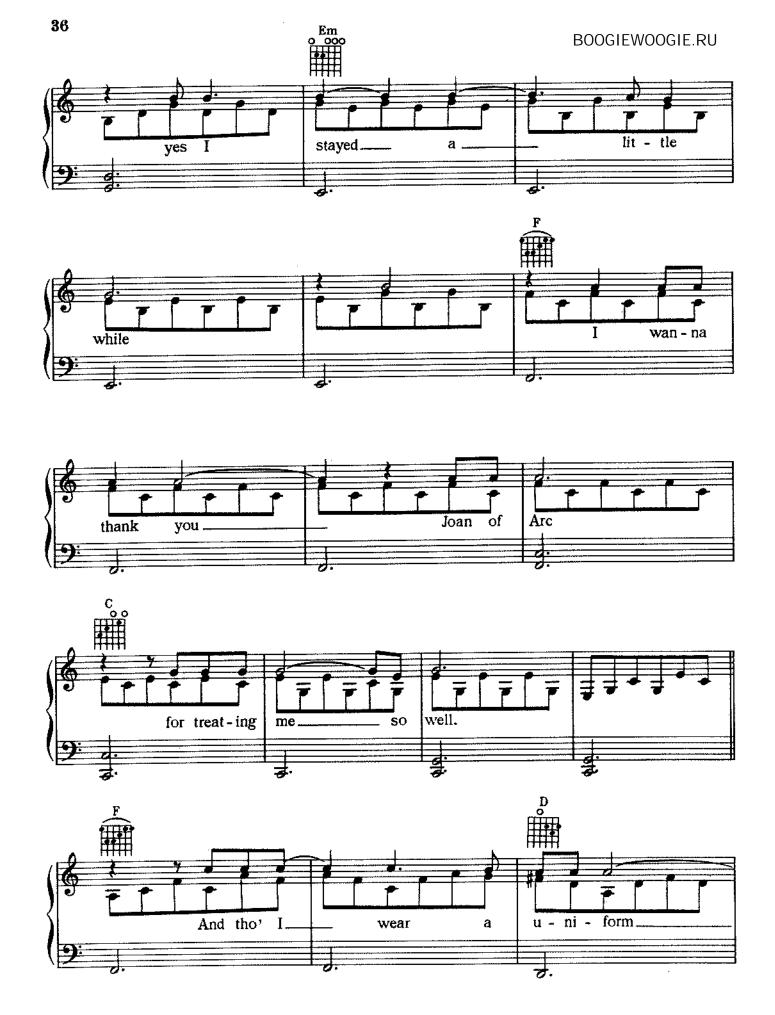


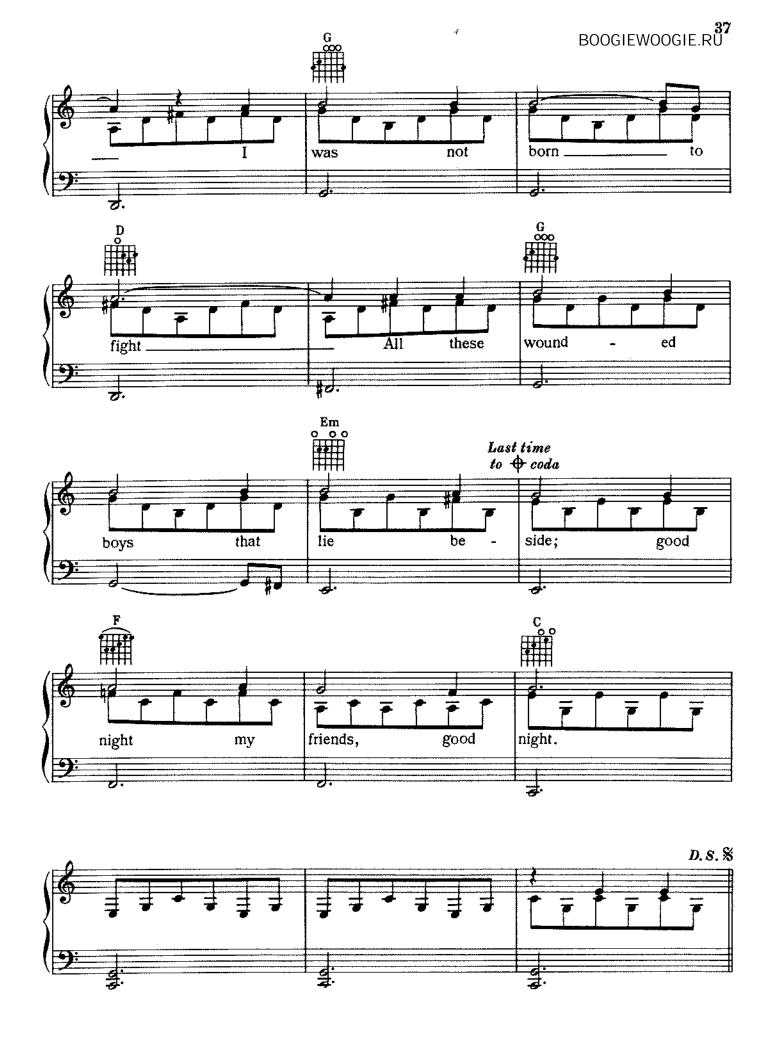


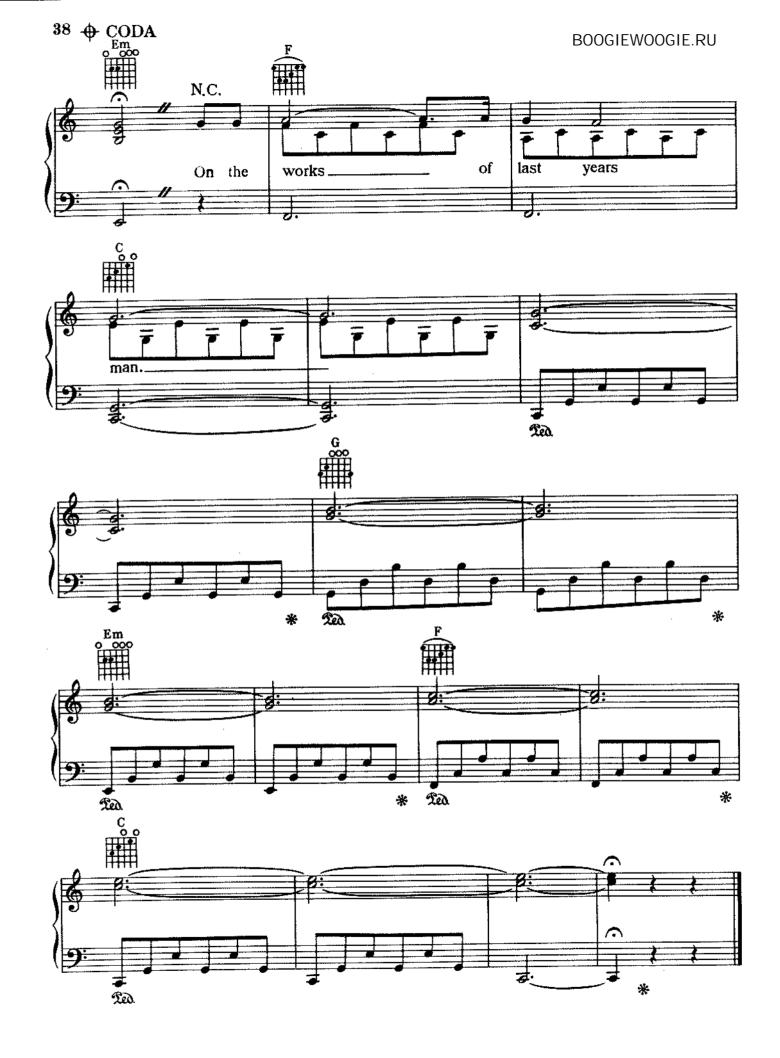












I came upon a wedding that old fam'lies had contrived Bethlehem the bridegroom Babylon the bride.

Great Babylon was naked Ah! she stood there trembling for me And Bethlehem inflamed us both like a shy and some orgy.

And when we fell together all our flesh was like a veil But I had to draw aside to see the serpent eat it's tail.

Some women wait for Jesus and some women wait for Cain So I hang upon my alter and I brush my Ax again.

And I take the one who finds me back to where it all began When Jesus was the honeymoon and Cain was just a man.

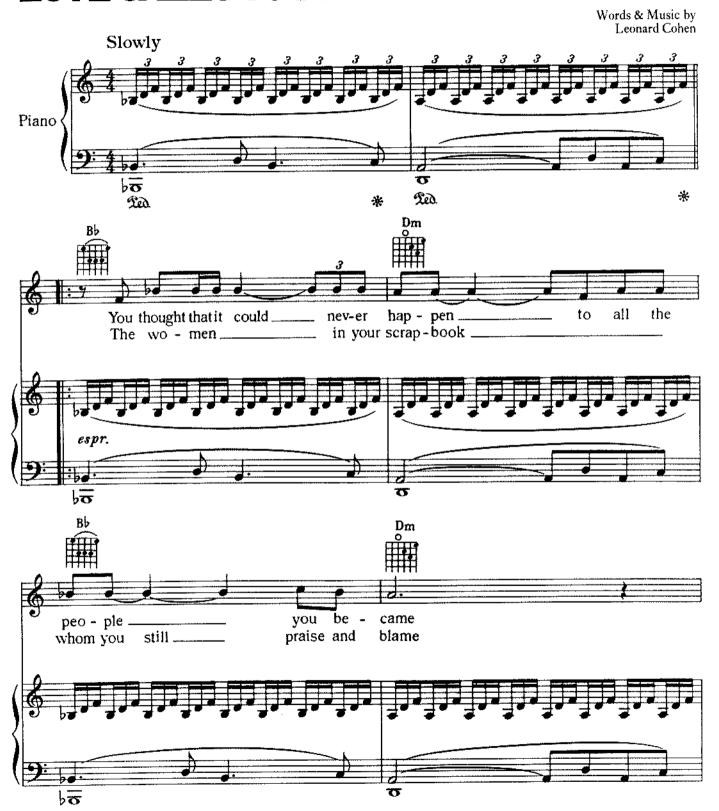
And we read from blessed bibles that are bound in blood and stain That the wilderness is gathering all its children back again.

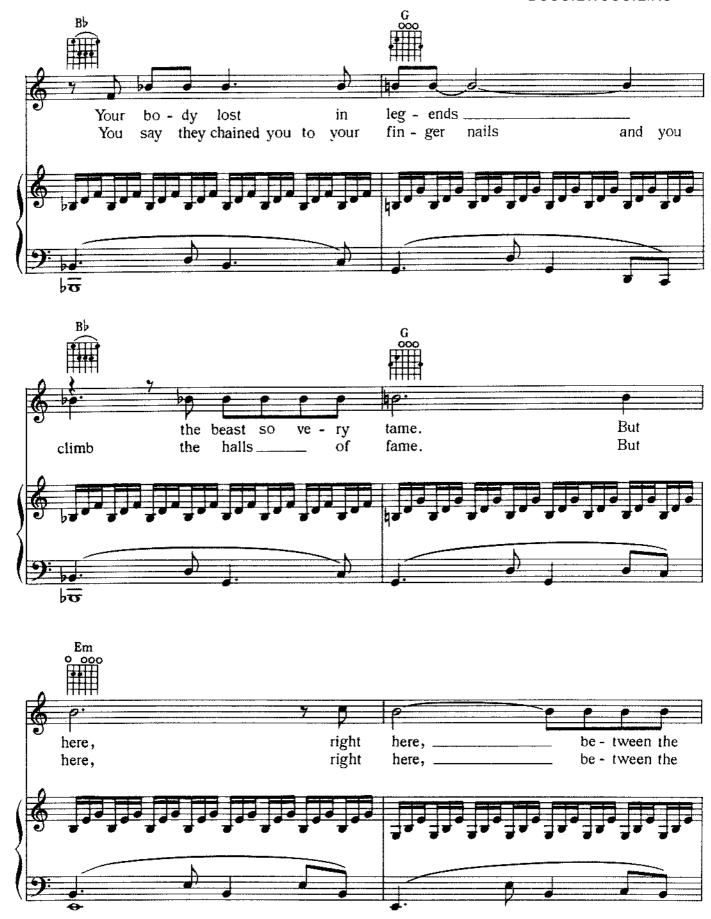
The rain falls down on last years man An hour has gone by and he has not moved his hand.

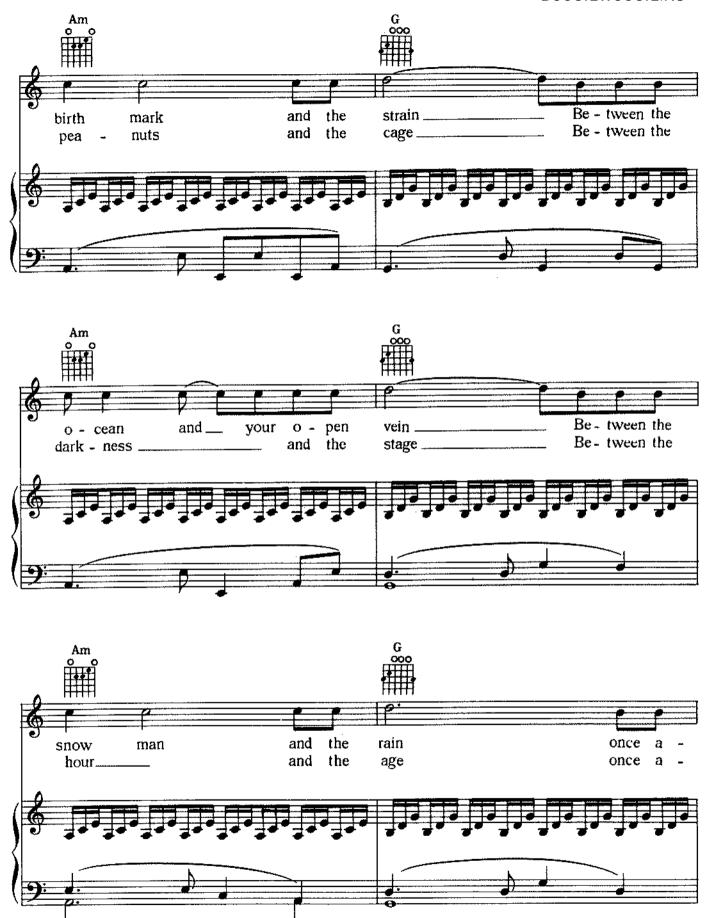
But ev'rything will happen if he only gives his word The lovers will rise up and the mountains touch the ground.

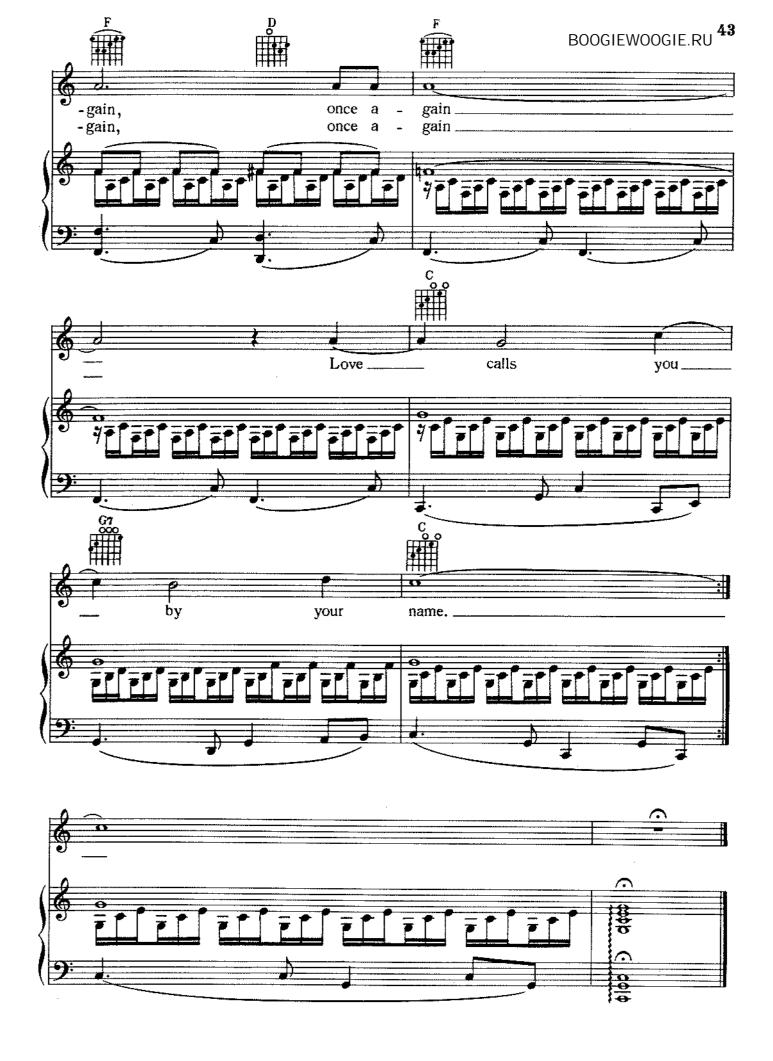
But the sky is like skin for a drum I'll never mend And all the rainfalls down and end on the works of last years man.

## LOVE CALLS YOU BY YOUR NAME









Shouldering your loneliness like a gun that you will not learn to aim You stumble into this movie house then you climb, you climb into the frame. Yes and here, right here, between the moonlight and the lane Between the tunnel and the train between the victim and his stain Once again, once again love calls you by your name.

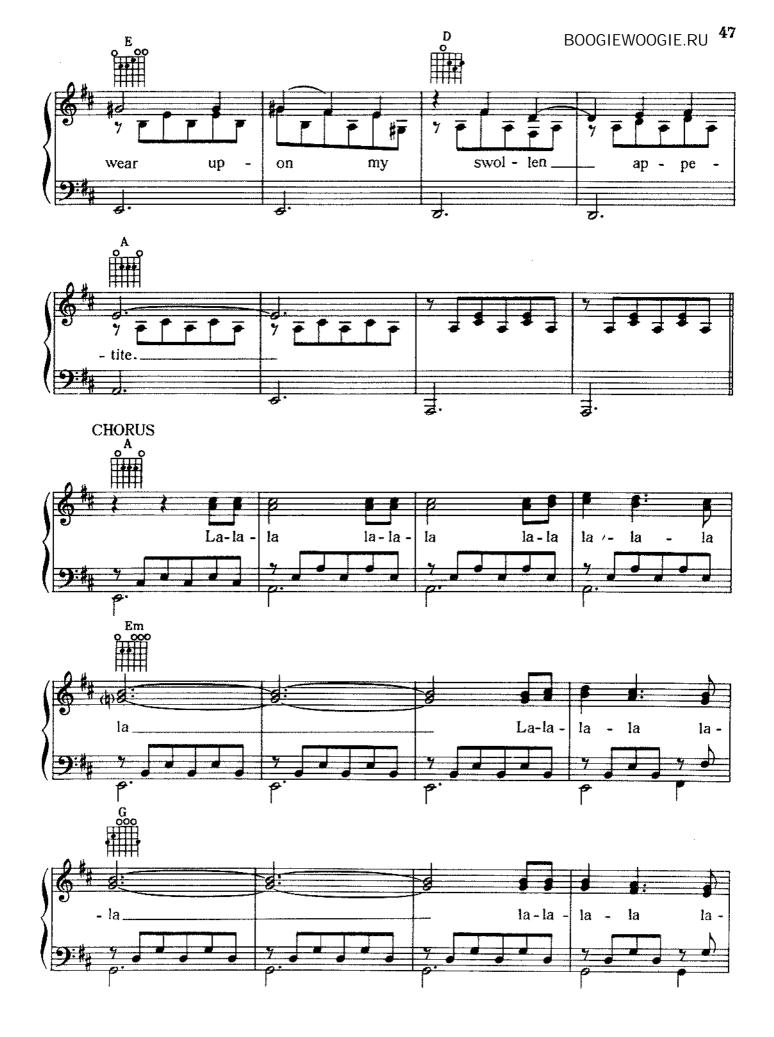
I leave the lady meditating on the very love which I do not wish to claim I've journeyed down a hundred steps but the street is still the very same. But here, right here between the dancer and his cane Between the sailboat and the drain between the newsreel and the tiny pain Once again, once again love calls you by your name.

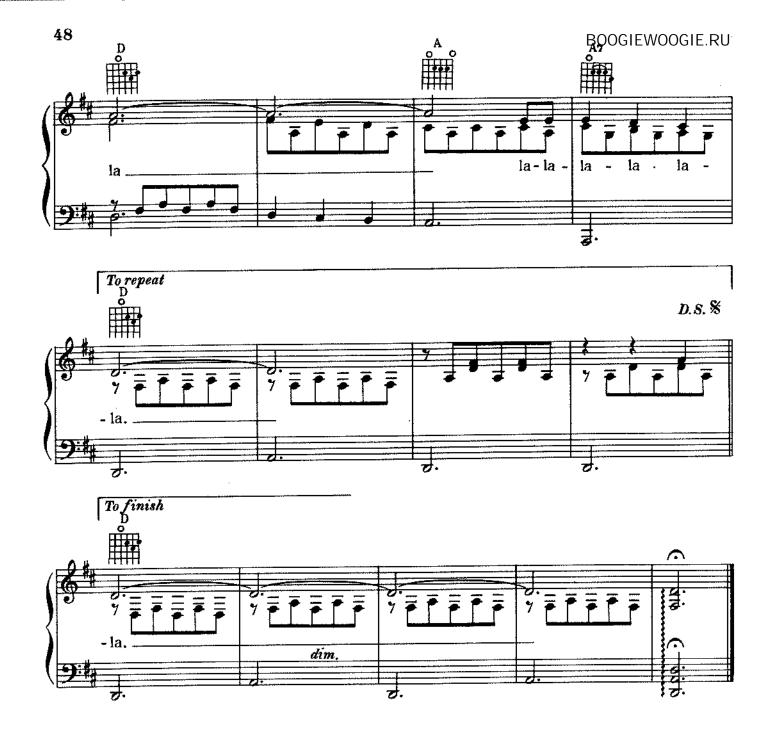
(Spoken:) Where are you Judy, where are you Ann (Sung:) where are the paths your heroes came
Wond'ring out loud as the bandage pulls away was I, was I only limping, was I really lame
Oh here, come over here.
between the windmill and the grain
Between the sundown and the chain
between the bray pool and the pain
Once again, once again
love calls you by your name.

## **JOAN OF ARC**









Now the flames that follow Joan of Arc as she came riding thru the dark
No moon to keep her armour bright
no man to get me thru this very smoky night.
She said: I'm tired of this war
I want the kind of work I had before
A wedding dress of something white to
wear upon my swollen appetite.

(To Chorus)

Well, I'm glad to hear you talk this way you know I've watched you riding ev'ry day Something in me yearns to win such a cold and lonesome heroine.

And who are you, she sternly spoke to the one beneath the smoke
Why I'm fire, he replied and I love your solitude, I love your pride.

(To Chorus)

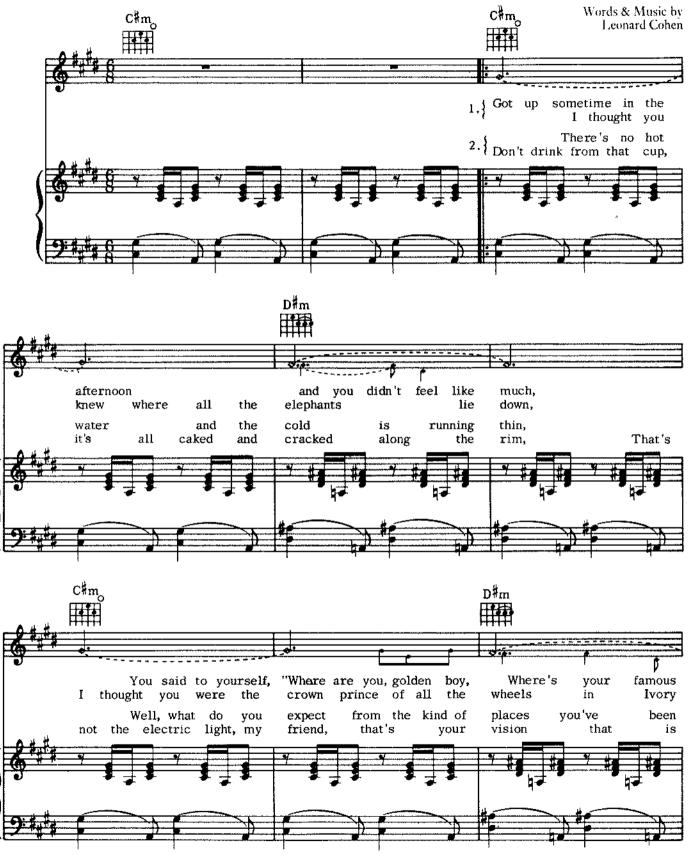
Then fire makes your body cold
I'm gonna give you mine to hold
Saying this he climbed inside
to be his one, to be his only bride.
And deep into his fiery heart
he took the dust of Joan of Arc
And high above the wedding guests
he hung the ashes of her wedding dress.

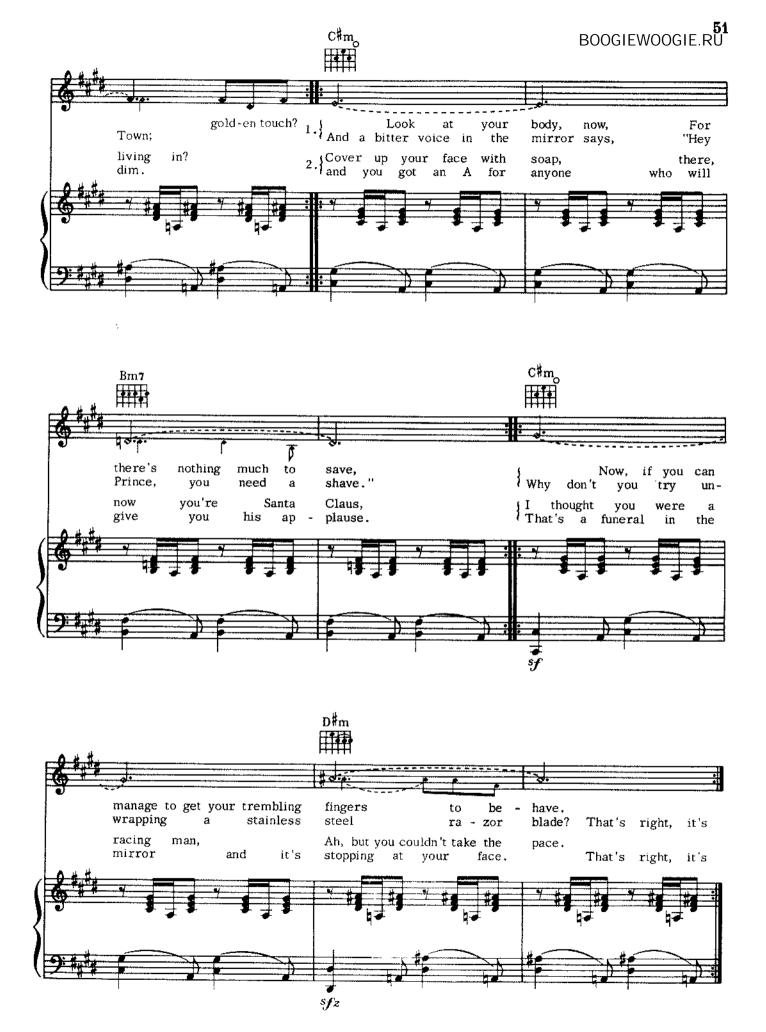
(To Chorus)

It was deep into his fiery heart
he took the dust of Joan of Arc
And then she clearly understood
if she was fire, oh, then she must be wood.
I saw her wince, I saw her cry
I saw the glory in her eye
Myself along a love at length
but must it come so cruel and, oh, so bright!

(To Chorus)















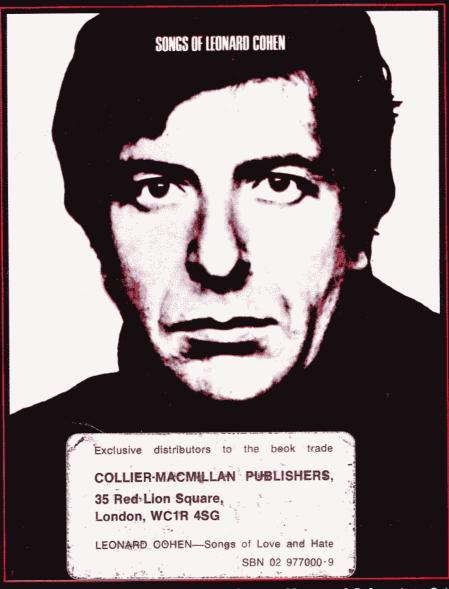


BOOGTEWOOGIE RII

## I WISH THE WOMEN WOULD HURRY UPAND TAKE OVER"

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